



Community of Christ

CHRIST'S MISSION, OUR MISSION

World Conference Delayed

After careful consideration of global pandemic recovery trends and consultations with field leaders and health professionals, the Community of Christ First Presidency has decided to delay 2022 World Conference until 2023. The presidency, in consultation with the World Church Leadership Council, has set 21-29 April 2023 for the next World Conference.

The difficult decision to delay was made in conjunction with church leaders, several who live and serve in nations greatly affected by the pandemic. Current published vaccination projections indicate people in many countries might have access to the COVID-19 vaccine in time to support traveling for a 2022 World Conference. However, that is not the case with all countries where the church has a presence. Based on the global projection of vaccination availability, the presidency weighed the need for the church to make timely decisions with the associated risk of bringing people together from around the world. Upholding our Enduring Principles in light of the collective information we have at this given time, it was wise to delay the next World Conference until delegates from around the world can safely travel, enter the USA, meet together, and return without contributing to community spread of COVID-19 or its emerging variants.

The First Presidency consulted with the Conference Organization and Procedure Team, which includes four registered parliamentarians, regarding their authority to delay World Conference due to a global pandemic. The most important reference in the church bylaws is found in Article V, Section 6: “These conferences meet at the call of the responsible administrative officers, at times and places determined by the bodies concerned, or without such provisions at times and places set by the responsible administrative officers.” This reference, broadly interpreted, gives the First Presidency the authority to determine the time, place, and manner of meeting. Further the 2019 World Conference passed WCR 1320 that provides “the World Conference authorize the First Presidency to set the dates and locations for future World Conferences in compliance with WCR 1288.”

Additionally, the First Presidency wanted the fields to fully resume in-person ministries. It was also felt that for the welfare of families and the church, we needed time for financial recovery from the effects of COVID-19.

Question and Answers

1. Summarize why the First Presidency delayed the 2022 World Conference by one year.

- Safety of delegates
- Safety of communities
- Limited effect on delaying legislative decisions
- Opportunity for the field to fully resume in-person ministries
- Financial recovery from the effects of COVID-19

2. Does the First Presidency have the authority to delay the conference date?

Yes. The First Presidency consulted with the Conference Organization and Procedure Team, which includes four registered parliamentarians, regarding their authority to delay World Conference due to a global pandemic. The most important reference in the Bylaws is found in Article V, Section 6: “These conferences meet at the call of the responsible administrative officers, at times and places determined by the bodies concerned, or without such provisions at times and places set by the responsible administrative officers.”

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3. Will there be any kind of gathering in 2022 online?

Yes, the First Presidency is working with the World Church Leadership Council to organize online gatherings in 2022 to worship and explore important topics before the church such as World Conference Resolution 1319 - Nonviolence and the nature of mission beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. Once details have been developed more information will be provided.

4. What are the dates for the 2023 conference?

The Presidency, in consultation with the World Church Leadership Council, has set 21-29 April 2023 for the next World Conference. The dates are later in April to avoid Holy Week and Easter.

5. Does this mean we will have conference again in 2025 to stay on schedule or will the following conference be in 2026?

The Presidency, in consultation with World Church leaders and the Conference Organization and Procedures Team, determined that after the 2023 World Conference, the next conference will be held in 2026. To hold a World Conference in 2023 and then have another conference in 2025 was not feasible due to the financial impact to the church and members.

6. Will there still be an International Youth Forum (IYF) in 2023?

The IYF director’s team is working with the Council of Twelve and First Presidency to determine the best plan for the next IYF. More information will be shared when a decision is made.

7. When will legislation be due for the new 2023 conference?

Legislation will be due 21 April 2022, one year before the start of conference. Legislation already received in anticipation of a 2022 World Conference is valid.

8. Will people be required to have a vaccine to attend the 2023 conference?

At this time, World Church leaders have discussed this question but have not made any final decision regarding requiring a COVID-19 vaccine to attend the 2023 World Conference. It is possible that the church may choose to rely on the criteria established for entry into the USA and not levy any additional requirements.

9. Vaccines are rolling out now; why can't we have conference in 2022?

As we uphold our Enduring Principles, it was important to delay the next World Conference until delegates from around the world could safely travel and enter the USA. Current published vaccination projections indicate that people in many countries will have access to the COVID-19 vaccine in time to support traveling for a 2022 World Conference. However, that is not the case with all countries where the church has a presence. Based on the global projection of vaccination availability, delaying the 2022 World Conference was the decision that aligned best with the church's value of the Worth of All Persons and the voice of representation from all mission centers of the church.

10. Why was the decision to delay made so far ahead of the 2022 World Conference?

Initially the plan was to make the decision in June 2021. Based on input from those who work the travel logistics for delegations around the world to attend a World Conference, a year of lead time is necessary to successfully pull everything together. As the decision was being considered, feedback from the World Church Leadership Council was that having a decision sooner than June 2021 would be helpful. Part of this related to needing time to identify and plan other experiences in 2022 if it was not safe to host the World Conference. With all these factors and based on the information that was available, the First Presidency proceeded with making the decision to delay.

11. Will delegates be able to attend conference online in 2023 if they do not want to or cannot travel to the USA?

At this time, all delegates will need to be physically present for the 2023 World Conference. Hybrid conferences that allow physical and online participation as a delegate may be a possibility in future conferences sometime beyond 2023. Although delegates will not be able to participate online in 2023, there will be opportunities for others to participate in some worship and non-legislative experiences. The 2023 World Conference schedule will indicate which events will be accessible online.